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Self - the joys and charm of antiquarian study



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THE SCOPE AND CHARM
OF
ANTIQUARIAN STUDY.

BY
JOHN BATTY, F.R. Hist. S.,

MEMBER OF THE YORKSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL AND THOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION.

SECTION OF THE HISTORY OF LONDON, &c.

LONDON:

GEORGE REDWAY,

11, ABBE STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

1881.

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THE SCOPE AND CHARM
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JOHN BATTY, F.R.Hist.S.,

MEMBER OF THE YORKSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL
ASSOCIATION;

AUTHOR OF THE HISTORY OF ROTHWELL, ETC.

(REPRINTED FROM THE *ANTIQUARIAN MAGAZINE AND BIBLIOGRAPHER*.)

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Preface.

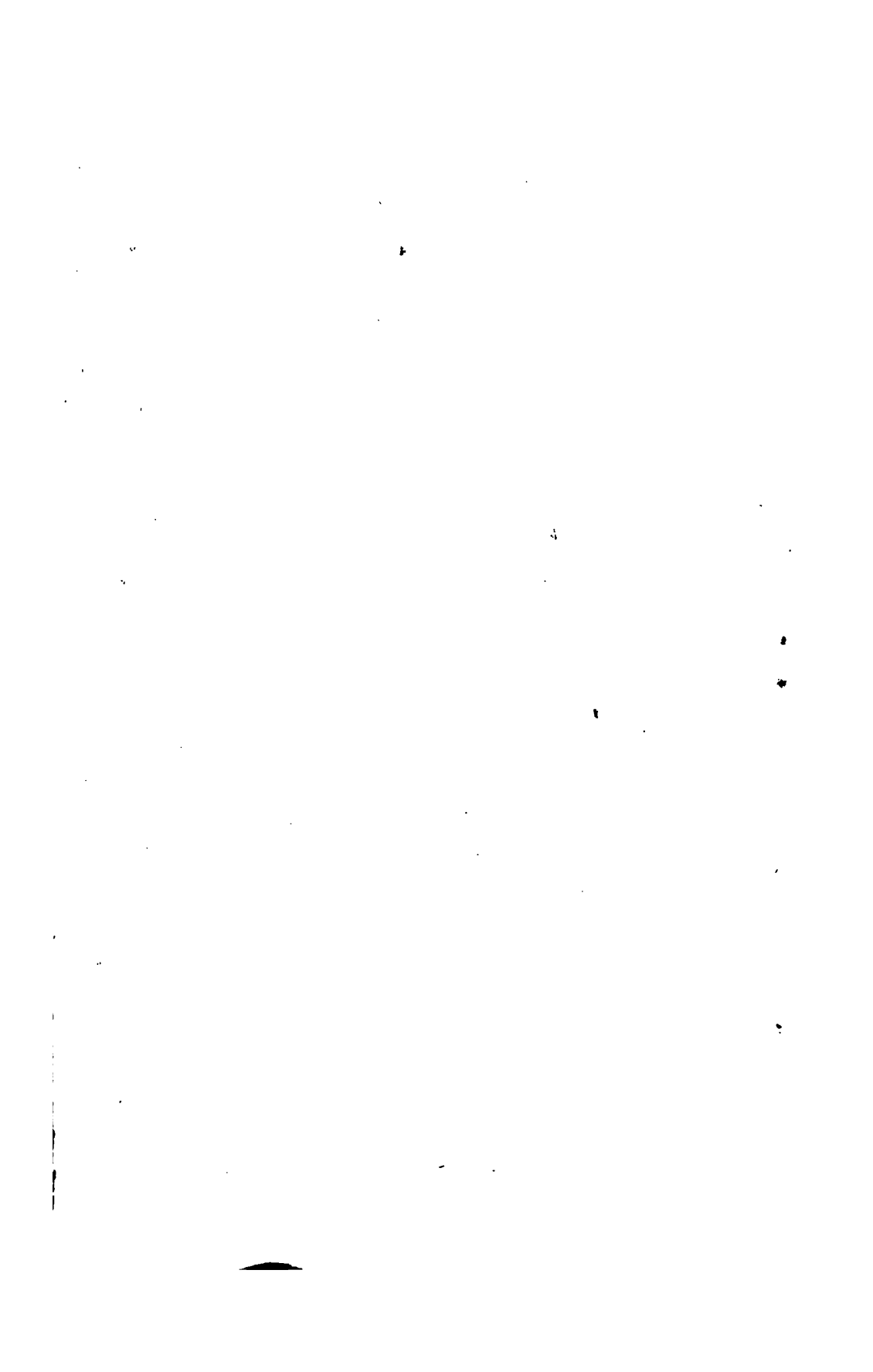
THIS Essay has been developed from a Paper originally read to the young men of a Country Debating Society with the object of inciting them to the interesting study of antiquity. Afterwards it was submitted to F. Ross, Esq., F.R.Hist.S., who made valuable suggestions as to its improvement, which have been gratefully adopted.

It was subsequently inserted—through the good offices of CORNELIUS WALFORD, Esq., F.S.S.—in the *Antiquarian Magazine and Bibliographer*, where it took an honourable place. Under the editorial hands of EDWARD WALFORD, Esq., M.A., it received considerable polishing.

Several of the literary friends of the Author, whose opinions are highly esteemed, recommended its re-publication in pamphlet form. After duly considering the suggestion, and with some diffidence, the writer now ventures to send it forth to the world further revised and enlarged, and hopes thereby to do good to a cause he has so much at heart.

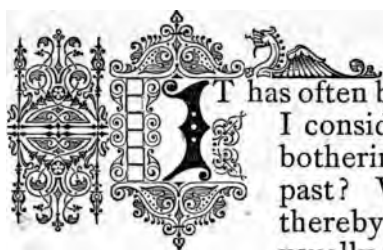
JOHN BATTY.

EAST ARDSLEY, NEAR WAKEFIELD,
August, 1882.





The Scope and Charm of Antiquarian Study.



It has often been asked, unthinkingly I consider, "What is the use of bothering your head about the past? What profit will you gain thereby?" such questions being usually followed by the remark, "What concerns us is certainly the present, and possibly the future." To the former of these expressions of a purely utilitarian character, a short but forcible answer may be given. The present is founded on the past, and is inseparably connected with it; neither can it be properly understood nor fully appreciated, and certainly no idea of the progress of civilisation can be arrived at, unless there is an intimate acquaintance with the history of the past. Our present advantages and comparative ease and comfort,—social, national, and religious,—are the result and outcome of the doings and struggles of our forefathers. Their struggles were in turn the consequence of the wrong done to

them and their fathers. And so the wrongs of the past have given us the liberty of the present.*

It is, therefore, a species of ingratitude to seek to neglect the past, and ignore its many influences. Does a child despise the memory of its deceased parents, or the legacy of wealth or wisdom it may inherit from them, simply because those parents are no more? No; as a rule it cherishes their likeness with fondest care, and values most highly their forethought and goodwill.

It is not, however, my object in this essay to refute expressions depreciatory of the past, I would rather induce the reader to study the lessons that may be learnt from it, and to touch on the charms which it unfolds to those who devote themselves to its consideration.

It naturally follows that a *veneration* for the past must be the leading motive in the pursuit of such a study. This feeling is pre-eminently shown in the antiquary, the loving student of antiquity, who delights in everything that is stamped with age, or is curious, quaint, or rare. Whatever furnishes an idea of the ancient past, whether in art, literature, or manners, has a special charm for him.

In order to attain his object, the aim of the antiquary must be to get at the *truth*. This involves on his part a great amount of laborious and patient research. He must sift all possible evidences, and leave no stone unturned that will throw light upon his subject. Even an ingenious hypothesis is

* "The present is only secure when it is well anchored in the past. The continuity of our institutions is the one great cause of their stability. The why and wherefore of the present can only be ascertained by reference to the past."—SIR JAMES PICTON.

sometimes necessary to worm out the hidden and apparently unwilling truth. In the process of inquiry he must reject what is proved to be worthless, and substantiate by clear evidence that which is correct.

To place the antiquary in his proper and relative position, it will be well to enumerate the various grades and classes of fact gatherers—the “gleaners after time,” as Mr. A. Dobson so happily styles them. First there is the ordinary *compiler*, who with little arrangement of material and few ideas, for the sake of mere accumulation of old information, strings together a number of past events. He is the first and least skilled worker in the extensive field of history. Then comes, as a step in advance, the *chronicler*, or *annalist*, who with better order and classification, and with the idea of showing the connection which events have with each other, furnishes a readable and often pleasant narrative of circumstances. He employs the graphic power of description; takes in an account not only of actions, but also of their more immediate effects. Then follows the *topographer*, or local historian, whose worthy aim is to rescue from oblivion the events which have transpired within a limited area, and as such are locally interesting and valuable, and ought to earn for him the thanks of all succeeding generations. These may not have a direct bearing on national history, but are nevertheless commendable and in the right direction. The scope of his labours necessarily borders, if it does not actually enter, upon antiquarian ground.

But it is to the antiquary that we especially

wish to direct our attention. It is he who takes in hand and deals with passages of fossilised history, in contrast to the general historian, who describes human motives and actions—in short, illustrates the drama of human life with its accessories. The former selects sectional or individual cases for his searching examination. He endeavours to verify date, fact, and circumstance connected therewith. This is not always an easy task, as it requires great judgment and discrimination; it is often unsuccessful at first, but even in the process of elucidation, information of an unexpected kind is often brought out. And when a fact of history is once established, it becomes a real acquisition to the wealth of human knowledge, which is placed by the antiquary at a higher value than that of mere worldly gain. For an indisputable fact is eternal, and thereby substantial progress is made.

The life of one man, however prolonged, is at best but of limited duration; and no antiquary can do more than gather together, elucidate, and verify a few facts, however industrious he may be: yet he should not be discouraged; for to his labours and those of his school the general historian is indebted in a high degree for a mass of well-ascertained facts—the results of comparative study and observation, which ought to assist materially in developing the science of the history of the human race.

The historian, in the highest sense of the term, with the comprehensive grasp, as it were, of a great architect, makes use of and manipulates these materials as the ground-work of his superstructure; or employs them as ornamental adjuncts and

graceful adornments, according to the bent of his artistic and literary genius.

Our subject naturally divides itself into two principal heads—first, the consideration of all pertaining to *letters*; second—those referring to *objects*. Dear to the mind of the antiquarian student, and indispensable to his success, are old, genuine, and trustworthy records; and here opens out an almost unbounded expanse of research, too wide for one mind to grasp, or for one person, however enthusiastic and devoted, to follow out. Independent documentary evidence is of great value, because it is penned with no purpose to deceive. The earliest documents are “rolls,” numerous in kind, but rightly so called because they were written or engrossed upon skins or parchment, the membranes being stitched together lengthwise, and when done with coiled up. This system was adopted before the invention of paged books. The most ancient of local Anglo-Norman records are the manorial court-rolls. These writings were held by the lord of the manor, who granted lands and possessions to his vassals or tenants on certain conditions of suit or service. For copy-holders they constituted the only reference as to title. Consequently they contain lists from time to time of those who succeeded to the lands; thus from them we get the early names of families connected with land and the descent of property. They often testify to the substantial beginnings of people who become in process of time notable and wealthy members of the community. The Lay Subsidy-roll of Richard II., a curious document of more than local importance, composed in Latin and

Norman-French, is most valuable and suggestive ; besides furnishing the names of all people of sixteen years of age and upwards, it shows the interesting and natural formation of surnames, and gives the medieval titles of distinction, such as "esquier," "chivaler," "ffranklan," denoting military or land tenure, also the trades and occupations, some of which have since become obsolete. These poll tax returns for the West Riding of Yorkshire indicate the relative wealth and comparative importance of each town, village, and wapentake of the fourteenth century. Some of these places, chiefly on account of the rise of manufactures, have grown to be in modern times far more rich and influential, whilst others have equally declined and become obscure from a variety of causes. These documents were drawn up nearly two centuries before the introduction of church registers.

Ancient wills, with their bequests for charitable purposes, and the performance of chantry offices for the repose of the souls of the defunct, give a curious insight into the state of religious belief from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. They likewise often specify the boundaries and names then existing of certain portions of ground, and, along with *post-mortem* inquisitions, describe the extent of the testator's possessions. Suits in Chancery, that is, the records of legal claims or disputes concerning property, as well as old deeds in general, answer the end of enabling one to form an idea of the distribution of land in former times. In other ancient MSS. there are all manner of rolls relating to the surroundings of

Royalty and Royal Acts, such as Exchequer, Patent and Close Rolls, Charters, Grants, Wardrobe Accounts, Accounts of Progresses, &c., Calendars of State papers, Parliamentary rolls, Domestic Annals, all more or less illustrative of national affairs. These latter are now coming to be more sought into by special and qualified scholars, and, from their trustworthiness, are rectifying the errors into which former historians have fallen. History is now-a-days written in a fashion totally different from that of the former times of violent partisanship; personal prejudice and political bias being as a rule eschewed, and simple matter of fact preferred, without preconceived notions, but with rhetorical embellishments; and this is recognised as the true method of writing history.

Again, there are ecclesiastical documents, such as Papal bulls of dispensation, indulgences, and excommunications; conventual registers, terriers, and charters of privileges and immunities, and the reports of visitors to the religious houses made previously to their dissolution, supplying an estimate of the revenues of these houses, their incomes from tithes and glebe lands, with inventories of church furniture and fabrics. These curious particulars are important to the local antiquary. There are also hosts of other ancient writings, the enumeration of which might become tedious to the reader.

In order of time, we now come to notice parochial registers, foremost those of the Church. These were found necessary for the identification of individuals, and to avoid confusion. They were

ordained by mandate of Thomas Cromwell, the Vicar-General, to be kept in every parish, and his orders were more or less carefully obeyed. They were to specify the dates of baptisms, marriages, and burials. It would have been an improvement upon this wise and far-seeing measure, if the exact date of birth and death had been supplemented. It seems, however, to have concerned spiritual authorities to insist on registration only as connected with Christian rites and Church observances; consequently, they were intended to include every member of the human family throughout the kingdom who from that time appeared on the stage of life or departed from it. Though scanty in information, these precious registers constitute the substratum of the social and domestic history of every parish, because they record the names of all those persons who have played a part, be it humble or distinguished, in the annals of the district in which they lived, or possibly became famous in a world-wide sense for learning, piety, enterprise, or valour; besides, they may be the only proof of a man's existence, and thus become valuable as legal evidence. It is interesting to note the names of lesser or decayed members of ennobled families, who probably migrated from the original settlement, and may be recognised by the appendages of *gen^{er}*, *gent.*==gentleman, and *Esqr.*==Esquire,—class distinctions formerly of real significance; also that some family names endure in the same neighbourhood for hundreds of years, whilst others become extinct or worn out in a much shorter period. Again, they are the foundations of pedigrees, and supply connecting links

for a system of genealogy. The number of yearly births or burials would form a basis from which to obtain an approximate idea of the probable number of the inhabitants of a parish or town from the middle of the sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth, just before the first authorised census was taken. Some of our registers are more interesting than others, on account of incidental remarks and particular dates ; but these are somewhat rare, and depended solely upon the whim or curiosity of the keeper of them. Occasionally they cast a side-light on our national history, and corroborate remarkable events. To unappreciative minds they may appear dry—to thoughtless ones—useless ; but studious examination soon proves them to be invaluable, and so they grow to be a fascinating study in many ways, not only to those of antiquarian feeling, but to the thoughtful reader also.

It must be borne in mind that scarcely any of the aforesaid kinds of documents are legible to the ordinary or casual reader, on account of the obsolete forms of letters and the many contractions of words. This, however, is only due to changes in the fashion of writing ; and the changes can be accurately followed. Yet, as there were many different and peculiar styles of handwriting employed in different ages, it requires the eye of the expert, that is, one who is accustomed to the formation and changes of early letters or characters and words (with the strange unfixedness of ancient orthography) to decipher them ; and, as every study of importance ultimately expands to a science, so we have the science of *Palæography*,

which treats on the nature of ancient writings and inscriptions—makes them understood, and authenticates their genuineness by their outward appearance and internal evidences.

The earlier registers are not easy to make out in a consecutive manner; and even when, by comparison of letters actually recognised, an alphabet can be constructed and words thereby joined together, they are often so contracted that an acquaintance with established forms of elision and abbreviation becomes needful. Certain antique modes of expression have likewise to be taken into account. Up to a comparatively modern date these were mostly latinised, and so a familiarity with Church-Latin is indispensable. The old style of the computation of time must not be forgotten, nor must saint days, religious festivals, regnal and pontifical years, all of which demand some knowledge of chronological order and sequence. The vastness of this subject must not act with deterrent effect upon the enquirer, for whom good handbooks have been provided and can be easily obtained.

Old official parish books, containing the names of constables, churchwardens, and the Poor and Highway accounts of the Overseers, are an excellent study. The simple items are not unfrequently explanatory of legal and national enactments which affected every household—notices of social practices, rude punishments or strange customs, and periodical usages, which really constitute the contemporary outline of the social history of the country to which they belong. Again, they contain names of roads and places, with cost

of church and road repairs, wages, prices of commodities, glimpses of public morality, and the maintenance of paupers, treatment of vagrants, and occasionally a list of "briefs" issued for charitable purposes.*

In order to become a thorough and competent antiquary—as, indeed, is the case in all liberal studies—it is necessary to undergo a special and technical education so as to arrive at proficiency. The instruments or tools of his profession are numerous, and therefore in this paper we can do little more than allude to them.

A valuable handmaid to the study of antiquity is the science of archæology, which describes and fixes the age of ancient sculptured remains or traces of man's handiwork on the earth from pre-historic times.† In this increasingly important branch of investigation, which bids fair to embrace the whole domain of the knowledge of past time in all its aspects, are a variety of "specialists." Some are interested in specimens of the flint and of the rude or polished stone implements of savage life, classified as those of the so-called stone age.

*For an excellent and often vivid picture of the social manners of the English people about 200 years ago—of those we might term the upper and middle classes of society—it will be well to consult the diaries of Evelyn, Pepys, Thoresby, and Oliver Heywood. Their gossiping pages are interspersed with numerous allusions to national events, such as deaths of notable persons, disasters, victories, or defeats, and religious acts, ceremonies, popular amusements, &c.

† I use the word "prehistoric" with reluctance and a belief in its very limited applicability. The word has a meaning only on the assumption that the adoption of the present forms of letters and method of transmitting ideas and records of facts is the beginning of history; yet the *savage* who sculptured rocks not less than the *artist* who graved Cleopatra's needle had an alphabet that transmitted a knowledge of ideas and facts although *we* may not at present be able to read it. That, however, is our fault, and not the establishment of "prehistoric" times.

Then, again, the tools and weapons of the bronze and afterwards those of the iron age, which indicate a gradual condition of human progress, because proving the knowledge and use of metals along with better adaptation and some artistic skill. From a study of all these, and of the contents of caves, tumuli, and barrows, is gathered an idea of the habits, conflicts, and burial-modes of early man. Others prefer examples belonging to a people still further advanced in civilisation, and, consequently exhibiting a higher art-perception and development, as instanced in the construction of monumental erections, old buildings, articles of *vertu*, pottery, jewellery, antique gems, personal ornaments, and in treasure-trove generally. To the persevering researches and explorations of the archæologist are we indebted for the exhumation of cities which have lain for thousands of years, buried with their remarkable and most interesting relics, which make us acquainted with such different civilisations, religions, customs, and historic annals. The deciphering of the so-called hieroglyphics of Egypt, of the cuneiform characters of the Assyrian cylinders, and of the inscribed bricks of Babylon, has lent most valuable aid in throwing new light on the Mosaic records, and thus affording corroborative proofs of the truth and genuineness of the Scriptures.*

* "Archæology, or the science of things that are old, embraces the systematic knowledge of the forms, dimensions, composition, associations, and geographical distribution of the objects which it studies. This knowledge, which is precise in its nature, and is derived from examination and comparison of the objects themselves, forms the groundwork of the science. It is purely the product of observation, and there neither is, nor can be anything of a speculative or hypothetical nature included in it. Upon this groundwork of exact knowledge there may be raised a superstructure of conclusions as to the

We proceed now to notice the more sectional or departmental studies of what may be regarded as the pictorial and emblematical illustrations of history, or, to plagiarise the title of Matthew of Westminster's book, "The Flowers of History."

Heraldry, the alphabet of martial deeds or race-aspirations, is the art of emblazoning arms and armorial devices on shields, flags, and seals, significant of certain honours and distinctions obtained by their bearers or their ancestors. In their inception they partook of a military character, and were granted by the sovereign, as the "fountain of honour," for deeds of daring or of public utility, and in some cases, perhaps of servility. The study of heraldry is intricate ; but when understood it is of great assistance to a biographical knowledge of the aristocracy of the kingdom, who are the great landowners, and consequently possess much dignity and power. Attached to the history of our aristocracy is a great amount of curious incident and romantic interest, which largely enters into and helps to make up our general history. The periodical "Visitations of the Heralds" to ascertain family particulars, from time to time, of those who had a right to bear arms, and to grant or confirm them, are very helpful in this direction. Heraldry, thus closely associated with genealogical matters, is even in an artistic point of view worthy of attention.

Numismatics, or an acquaintance with coins,

relations of these objects to ancient conditions and customs of human life, which they more or less clearly disclose, and in this its widest scope, archæology aims at producing a history of man by his works ; of art, by its monuments ; of culture, by its manifestations, and of civilization by its developments." ANDERSON'S *Scotland in Early Christian Times*.

was formerly a pre-eminent qualification and mark of an antiquary. To be able to decipher their inscriptions was a sign of wonderful learning and discernment. No doubt the medallic history of a nation in all its significance is very instructive, as coins are often stamped with the exact portraiture of emperors, governors, and royal personages—others are commemorative of important events, and, when arranged in chronological order, are a valuable acquisition to history in general. Coins and money tokens were issued for purposes of trading—some were minted in times of emergency on the metals or materials readiest to hand. Their intrinsic rather than their nominal value is always sure evidence of the wealth and prosperity of the nation to which they belong at the period of their use. They often exhibit curious and enigmatical rim-legends, and the oldest of them have many peculiar features of workmanship. Clipping and coining, and the uttering of counterfeit coins have in all ages engaged dishonest ingenuity, and were formerly viewed by the law as a capital crime; the statute book and the records of criminal courts bear evidence to the severe punishments awarded to those detected in such base practices.

The minute examination and careful rubbing of engraved memorial brasses, incised slabs, gravestone inscriptions, &c., are congenial duties of the genuine antiquary. The drawings of monumental and sepulchral effigies, of recumbent cross-legged knights clothed in suits of chain-armour with sword at side; of ecclesiastical dignitaries robed in full canonicals, with closed and upraised hands as in

the act of devotion, are true indications of the age they represent, and as such have always been a favourite and instructive study of the reverential antiquary, as affording examples of mediæval art, costume and religious expression.

“ Brave knight ! thy life may teach us more
 Than philosophic sages,
 And from the misty days of yore
 Echo to future ages.
 A moral plain may yet remain,
 Though we forget the story,
 That noble aim is more than fame,
 And truth surpasses glory.”

The origin and purpose of churchyard crosses have excited much interesting archæological discussion. Their interlaced tracery, grotesque figures, and occasional Runic or Saxon inscriptions, when duly interpreted, introduce us to primitive religious ideas, and throw a curious light on antiquity.

Then again, with respect to arms and armour, ranging from the earliest and rudest to the more elaborate forms, though of ghastly import, on them an instinctive love of the beautiful asserts itself. Fabulous or mythical swords are connected with strange stories of the supernatural powers which they are said and supposed to have conferred upon their privileged owners. Body-armour was light or ponderous in make according as the exigencies of the early modes of warfare demanded, and the skill of smiths could supply. The introduction of gunpowder and the invention of firearms caused the manufacture of shot-proof armour, which became an intolerable weight, and so brought about gradually its disuse. A series of such accoutrements must conjure up, in

the reflective mind many chivalric and historic scenes of heroic adventure and prowess. Old armour likewise may serve as a highly suggestive study of human nature in its passionate and fantastic moods, independent of any consideration of it as a means of defence or offence.

"That iron gauntlet tightly may have clasped
A royal standard bravely to that breast ;
That arm, deep-dyed in gore, a sword have grasped,
Or in a dead embrace a foe have pressed."

Costume, in all its vagaries of fashion, expressing an ideal of human adornment and personal beauty, is a strange and amusing illustration of taste and vanity, often degenerating into a madness. The sumptuary regulations so curiously minute during the Plantagenet and Tudor reigns were necessary in order to suppress extravagance in wearing apparel, the catalogue of which may appear odd to us of modern time, even with our æsthetic ideas. This subject includes specimens of antique needlework, embroidery, tapestry, and lace—elaborate relics, each of historical value, furnishing quaint though disproportioned pictures of the period. These also are proofs of patient industry amongst the higher classes of society. We might profitably consider under this head—the introduction of weaving and the royal encouragement and protection given to foreign weavers to settle in England ; the unwise restrictions put upon trade before the science of political economy was understood, and the progress of textile manufacture, along with the peculiar but beneficent customs of craft-guilds, with their religious observances, and principles of fraternal association.

Again, antique furniture, from the severely

plain work of Plantagenet days to the richly-carved and inlaid ornamentation which marks the Tudor era, from the stout and solid to the graceful and classic model, is in a measure indicative of the character of the people by whom it was produced and of the age in which it flourished. Where no date is affixed the practical judgment of a student of old cabinet work is required to decide its date according to the style, markings, or ornament peculiar to the "Mediaeval," "Renaissance," the "Jacobean," the "Louis Quatorze," or the "Queen Anne" periods. The construction, too, of each article furnishes palpable tests of the notions of ease, convenience, luxury, or the reverse, which existed from time to time. Their specific use and location in the household economy, along with the customs and habits of those who used them, must not be overlooked.

To pass to quite another subject. The old *Painted Glass* to be seen in the windows of our churches often contains iconographic or emblematical figures of angels, saints, and martyrs, filled in with borderings of foliage and conventional ornamentation. These were intended to convey doctrinal lessons through a pictorial medium to the minds of the worshippers, who were mostly unlettered, and had not the means to procure a lay folks' "mass booke," or an illuminated copy of a portion of the Holy Scriptures in their own vernacular, previous to the art of printing. In old baronial halls the windows often exhibit the family escutcheons, with their differences or impalements for inter-marriages; as well as municipal shields, containing symbols, illustrative of the traditions,

early history, or staple trades of the towns they represent. The study of ancient glass demands special learning and skill, many points having to be taken into consideration in determining its age, colouring, and arrangement of pattern, whether *in situ* or displaced by some external cause.

Mural or Wall Paintings were of as early a date as Painted Glass, and apparently of universal use in churches to decorate the plastered wall-spaces. In the earlier ages, from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries, the legends of the saints formed a fertile subject for representation. Later; moral and symbolical subjects took the place of the preceding ; while, in the seventeenth century (the custom continuing at least as late as the reign of Charles I.), we have more prosaic—Time with his hour-glass, Death with his scythe, &c. ; or the more familiar Moses and Aaron, Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Ten Commandments.

Pottery, again, is a most delightful study, because the fictile art and the plastic nature of the material enable the hand of the artist to bring out of it graceful forms and bid them live. Innumerable examples of ceramic art in British, Roman, Grecian, Samian, Cyprian, Phœnician ware, Etruscan vases, &c., are constantly turning up in various parts of the world. From these every-day utensils—whether coarse, rude, or shapely—required and used in all ages and in all stages of civilisation, a good idea may be gathered of the habits of social life, and a judgment may be formed of how little or how far a people has advanced in the perception of the beautiful as allied to the useful. Plain or richly chased metallic vessels, old plate,

whether civic or church, are often suggestive of curious convivial or funereal customs and ecclesiastical uses.

Almost coeval with the building of convents and churches was the introduction of the use of bells. In primitive times the sacred edifices were few and far between, and the inhabitants were thinly and widely scattered, so that the sound of the "church-going bell" was to them the only notice of the time for public service. Bells were accordingly the means of inviting to public or private worship, or of solemnly reminding the hearers of the "passing away" of another spirit from the body. But the uses of Church bells in ancient times were very varied and had many significations—both of a religious and secular nature.* The history and progress of bell-founding and the quaint and piously suggestive mottoes inscribed on bells is an attractive study.

Coming more closely to the inner life of a people, we notice the science of philology, or the

* The following culled from NORTH'S *Church Bells of Lincolnshire*, will give some idea:—"Early Sunday Peals," "The Sermon Bell," "Sunday Mid-day Peals," "Leaving-off Bell," "Pudding Bell," "Knolling of the Aves," "Sacrament Bell," "Passing Bell," "The Death Knell," "Soul Bell," "Burial Peals," "Chime me to Church," "Peals after Funeral," "Dumb Peals," "Invitation Bell," "Obit or Year-mind," "Commemorative Peals," "Sanctus Bell," "Priest's Bell or Ting Tang," "Tantony Bell," "Anthem Bell," "Sacring Bell," "Agnus Bell," "Houselling Bell," "Corse or Lych-bell," "The Curfew," "Early Morning Bell," "Gabriel Bells," "The Shrive or Pancake Bell," "Advent Ringing," "Christmas Peals," "Lenten Ringing," "Saints' Days Echoes," "All Hallow's Ringing," "Dedication Peals," "Baptism Peals," "Banns Peals," "Wedding Peals," "Wedding Bell," "Bride's Peal," "May-day Peals," "Dole Meadow Bell," "Apprentice Bell," "Fair and Market Peals," "Mayors and Election Peals," "Birthday Peals," "Call Bells," "The Oven-bell," "Storm and Tempest Peals," "Harvest Bell," "Gleaning Bell," "The Gatherums," "Execution Bell," "Racing Peals," "Fire Bell," "Gunpowder Plot," "Market Bell," "Butter Bell," "Mote or Common Bell," "Vestry Bell," "Dykes and Drains Jury Bell," "Bull-running Bell," "Loyal Peals," &c.

origin and significance of words ; more especially we allude to place-names. These are highly instructive, because they are as "history in a nutshell." They indicate the state or appearance of the country in primeval times, and the conceptions of nature in its wild and rugged aspects formed by the first name-givers ; moreover, they are almost imperishable, because they refer to the configurations of the hills and valleys and rivers, and these seem to be eternal. The earliest are of Celtic origin, but they are very few ; and their rarity is a clear evidence of the exceedingly small number of the original Celtic population. Personal names were often significant of physical excellencies or bodily deformities. These, however, were changed in their descendants by a gradual process of selection and evolution, and thus human features became modified, and other mental idiosyncrasies brought out. Consequently they appeared in later times as strange misnomers, but still the original designation of the ancestor was retained by his descendants. As civilisation and luxury grew employments multiplied, and surnames were added to distinguish those who became skilled in any particular branch.

Then, again, with respect to the minor names of places. Tracts of land, lanes, and boundary marks remain to this day with their ancient and peculiar names. They appear in many instances to be inexplicable to us, but from the first they have had an appropriate meaning, referring to their appearance, shape, or the use to which they were put, and eventually that meaning will be discovered.

A comparative study of the various dialects or jargons of a people—their native *patois*, and the formation and etymology of words prevailing in certain geographical divisions, will show the influx of settlers, whether of Saxon or Scandinavian origin, marking the localities they inhabited and largely influenced, besides illustrating phases of old life by the archaic expressions still lingering in the district.

Folk lore, or the traditionary wisdom of the common people, is remarkably instructive and curious, as comprehending the sayings, rhymes, proverbs, and superstitions of our forefathers, clinging to and connected with every movement and transaction of daily life. These involve strange ideas, notions, and beliefs concerning fairies, elves, omens, witchcraft, divination, and the like. Many for their roots might be traced to the Old World mythologies. They were handed down in rhythm from father to son, or recited in nursery rhymes in a peculiar cadence by the fond mother to her infant, and being thus impressed on the youthful mind were not easily forgotten. In spite of the incrustation of ignorance and superstition which surrounds it, folk lore contains many scintillations of truth, and though composed of apparent trifles points to some deep and hidden meaning.

Ancient ballads, songs, and minstrels bring us in imagination from the scald and bard of a Druidic priesthood to the minstrel of the age of chivalry, when the troubadour, the poet of Provence, was welcomed with high favour at the courts of princes and in the old baronial halls.

Under the head of manners, customs, and usages—a very large but fascinating subject—we may include primitive folk moots or moots,—the out-door assemblages of the people; tings or things, as in our ting law, the old way of spelling it, but now called Tingley, that being the Scandinavian name for mounds or hills where the law was announced or administered; the Saxon witan-a-gemote, or council of the wise men of the realm; the court leet, or little law court of the Anglo-Saxons, but afterwards adopted along with the high court baron by their Norman conquerors; the sheriff's tourn or turn; trial by jury; inquests; whimsical or jocular tenures; punishments for drunkenness, profanity, quarrelling, which brought into use the stocks, the pillory, ducking and chucking stools, the branks for scolding women; the riding of the stang for wife-beating or unfaithfulness; the performance of public penance in the church by those who fell under the ban of ecclesiastical censure, rude and summary ways of judicial chastisement by a kind of physical torture or outward exposure, without the chance of paying a fine. These modes of punishment would not of course be tolerated nowadays, so much has public opinion changed, if it has not improved. Sports and pastimes, some now extinct or fast dying out, because unfitted to the growing humanity of our age, and, according to our thinking, barbarous, uncouth, and even repulsive, such as bear and bull baiting, cock fighting, dog fighting, &c. These olden practices certainly do not tend to make us desire to recall the good old times, nor to regret that we did not live in our grandfathers'

days. Other customs, however, were of a charitable and hospitable nature, and present pleasing glimpses of the days of yore, such as the kind and social acts of monk to wayside pilgrim or traveller, of baron to his retainers, or of farmer to his husbandmen and servants, especially on the many festival occasions. They tell of out-door enjoyments, of dancing on the village green around the gaily-trimmed May-pole, of archery, hawking, the chase, of quarter-staff, tournaments, wrestling, of wassailing and church ales, and of good and plentiful cheer at Christmas, kept up probably in a more boisterous but withal hearty and cheerful fashion; indoor amusements, consisting of masques, revels, pageants, mummeries, and so on. The story of these rough but healthy pastimes of our ancestors serves to beguile many a pleasant hour in the pages of the old chronicler, the novelist, and the poet.

As age creeps on, the human mind naturally reverts to the prospect of death and its warnings. Accordingly, there is a numerous class of people who are fond of gathering grimly quaint and even ludicrous *epitaphs*. But epitaphs of a solemn type often convey sound advice as to conduct, and speak to the reader of the uncertainty of life, and the vanity of worldly aspirations. Others present a strangely trifling, burlesque, or even satirical aspect of the human mind. To the antiquary the interest is increased in proportion to the age of these inscriptions, and the peculiar thought embedded in them, as well as to the style of antique lettering, or ornamental work, on the tombstone.

Again, curious and eccentric *wills* are cognate to this subject, exhibiting, as they often do, the wit

or humour of the testator, or the one morbid sentiment of his life, and often the short-sightedness of his judgment, as shown by the difficulty with which these strange bequests are adapted to subsequent requirements.

Sun dials—those silent monitors of the fleeting hour. Remote in their origin and uses as earliest of time-measurers—long prior to the contrivances of hour-glass, water-clocks, or our own more complicated clocks and watches—though now superseded—are worthy of preservation for their pithy and appropriate mottoes.

There are certain people who may be termed enthusiasts, but who hardly deserve the name of real antiquaries, because they add little to a scientific knowledge of the past. They are merely “curiosity hunters,” and as such are troubled with a special “craze,” showing itself in various symptoms, and exhibiting the extravagances of antiquarianism. Their whole aim is whimsical—to get possession of the earliest and rarest editions of printed books, especially black-letter copies, and selfishly to hoard them up in their own private and secluded libraries. Nothing pleases them better than—

“A book of fables, graced with print of wood,
Or else the jingling of a rusty medal,
Or the rare melody of some old ditty
That first was sung to please King Pepin's cradle.”

Others amass engravings, portraits, views of places, old maps, &c. Many value the autographs of notable persons, who have played an important part in the world's history. Some prize, and almost adore, the relics or memorials of the great ones of the earth, or which they will give fabulous prices.

Well, let us not too severely blame these harmless follies. It is not that these remains, intrinsically, are worth a tithe of the money so freely paid for them, but because they are unique in their way—for the same circumstances, and the same genius that produced them, can never appear again. It may be a head-dress of the beautiful but unfortunate Mary, Queen of Scots, a signature of Byron or Sir Walter Scott, a watch of Oliver Cromwell, or a military memento of the Great Napoleon. The collector, however, values not the article for its inherent worth, but for the halo of historic interest with which it is surrounded or associated—a feeling that is touchingly expressed in the lines of Eliza Cook on a subject humble in itself, but quite akin to the above :—

“ I love it, I love it, and who shall dare
To chide me for loving that old arm-chair ?
I’ve treasured it long as a sainted prize,
I’ve bedewed it with tears, and embalmed it with sighs.
’Tis bound by a thousand bands to my heart,
Not a tie will break, not a link will start.
Would you learn the spell ? A mother sat there !
And a sacred thing is that old arm-chair.”

Thus have I attempted to sketch an outline of the work, aims, difficulties, and achievements of the antiquary. I have been unable, however, to give but few illustrative examples. Each department of the subject, to be fully treated, would require a series of special papers. I trust, however, that the extent of this wide range of study has not disheartened any readers, imbued with the spirit of antiquity, from entering upon it, but rather that they will have received a new and lasting impulse to make their mark in some particular branch.

No one can be proficient in all departments of

antiquarian science. Few have time or money at command to make original research in our national archives, or have privileged access to the muniments of noble and gentle families of distinction. All, however, may be collectors, in some humble way, of information that otherwise might be irretrievably lost, or protectors from vandalism or desecration of important monuments of antiquity within their own neighbourhood, and thus saving or recovering somewhat, as Lord Bacon says, "from the deluge of time." It is, therefore, well to select one or more kinds of study congenial to our taste or inclination. Work of an intellectual kind to a healthy mind is always agreeable. Even some innocent hobby as a recreation, and to sweeten life's toils, is desirable.

I will now briefly allude to other *charms*, besides those which naturally arise in the pursuit. To a mathematical mind a game at chess, or the solution of a difficult problem, causes pleasure and satisfaction ; so, likewise, the antiquarian scholar delights in following up and bringing to light a lost pedigree and connecting it with the true genealogical link, the reading of a puzzling heraldic shield, or the recovery of an almost obliterated inscription. Besides, the diligent antiquary is ever, as it were, digging in the golden mine of ancient lore ; he is always in the anticipation of turning up some unknown treasure of antiquity, or of finding some gem of priceless literary worth. Is there no *charm* in this ? Others may accumulate this world's wealth, which, for aught they know, may be dissipated by their successors ; but the antiquary adds to the wealth of human learning

which can never *diminish*, and he leaves behind him an imperishable name, and the world intellectually richer than it was before.

The antiquary has an "oasis in the desert," a spring of secret joy that the grovelling worldlings know not of. "His mind to him a kingdom is." He can retire from the bustling haunts of men, and contemplate the wisdom and the glory of the past. Every "stick and stone" of a museum has some familiar tale to tell him of surpassing interest. If he examines a cabinet of coins and medals, their superscriptions and effigies conjure up to his imagination some stirring scene of history, or the exploits of some renowned hero. True, moments of sweet melancholy come over him, when he considers the decay and uncertainty of earthly things. As he wipes off the dust that may have covered some faded document of Anglo-Saxon or mediæval date, and pores over its contents, he reflects on the being who penned the precious MS. with its quaint wording, and yearns to know of his individuality, what manner of man he was ; but this is denied him, for the oracles of time on this point are dumb.

"Who shall withdraw the curtain of the past?
Beneath whose shade eternal secrets lie;
Ask of the midnight storm and wandering blast,
Their only answer is a long-drawn sigh."

Of this he is assured, that the scribe has been "gathered to his fathers" ages ago, that the hand which wrote it has, along with the body, perished into indistinguishable dust, and that the brain which conceived the sentiment has ceased its functions for many centuries. But the thought remains for the benefit of mankind, and is ever-

lasting ; so it will be here when the antiquary is gone. Do his inquisitive eyes rest on a mummy, swathed in its cerements, and encased in a sarcophagus, inscribed with hieroglyphics recounting the biography of its mysterious inmate ? He stands aghast, and thinks of the lapse of ages—of upwards of three thousand years—a great gulf of time ! almost too bewildering for the human mind to bridge over, since that shrivelled and disagreeable form, possessed of the divine afflatus, was an active human being—walked, ate, drank, slept, and performed functions like beings of the present, and perchance in his day and generation held an official position, was clothed with honour, and received the homage of men.

“ Statue of flesh—immortal of the dead !
Imperishable type of evanescence.”

“ Antiquity appears to have begun
Long after thy primeval race was run.”

He meditates on the rise and fall of mighty empires, and the coming into the foreranks of people who were then, as it were, enveloped in the mist of the unknown. And he calls to mind that even his own ancestors—the painted native Britons—running about the woods half naked, had not, for ages after this, come in contact with Roman arms, or been subject to their dominion. Nations may come, and nations may go, but the stream of history rolls on for ever.

“ Man and his marvels pass away,
And changing empires wane and wax,
Are founded, flourish, and decay.”

Venerable ruins are the special delight of the antiquary. To his mind there is a charm in the

remains of an old castle within whose arena, or about whose base, many a bloody battle may have been fought, or within whose gloomy dungeons a royal prisoner confined, and so its traditionary legends may be closely entwined with the national history. As he carefully examines its fragments of strong masonry, and reckons up its former proportions, he pictures to his mind's eye its loopholed towers, its ancient bulwarks, its strong walls and portcullis, with moated surroundings and drawbridge—a grim, frowning fortress of feudal times, typifying exclusiveness, defiance, and oppression to which we happily have long been strangers.

“There is a power
And magic in the ruin'd battlement,
For which the palace of the present hour
Must yield its pomp, and wait till ages are its dower.”

An ancient abbey, its walls clad with verdure, has a fascinating charm and attraction for him; here his soul would dwell for ever. How he admires its beautiful shafts, arches, and tracery—though gnawed by the keen tooth of time. He considers the pious munificence of its founders; he thinks of the genius of its builders, and of their wisdom in the choice of its site. As he slowly and thoughtfully parades its bare and unroofed cloisters, he conjures up its architectural completeness as a building designed for the worship of the Great Creator; he fancies he hears the worshippers chanting their hymn of praise and adoration, and sees them reverently bowing within its sacred walls, and celebrating the service or performing the ritual of pre-Reformation times. Thus it appears that the antiquary will never become entirely extinct, for even our

